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Fulbright: No time for relics

A modest little pamphlet put out by the U.S. Information Agency ten years ago said that USIA "tells America's story abroad." How simple it seemed: Uncle Sam reciting "Once upon a time in 1776 ..." to an underdeveloped nation on his knee. It's a different story today, as our propaganda machine tries to find the right words and the right tone of voice for a period in which the nation is simultaneously at war, at peace and at odds with itself.

In Washington last week, USIA won approval of its new budget at the current \$200 million level, but only after the Senate restored cuts made in committee that would have reduced the agency's film and print activities and all but dismantled the Voice of America. The authorization squabble grew out of continuing rivalry between Congress and the White House over foreign affairs, and a running feud between USIA director Frank Shakespeare, a conservative former network executive who helped design President Nixon's TV image in the 1968 campaign, and Sen. J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and a critic of USIA since its inception in 1953. While the showdown vote was an Administration victory, it did nothing to clarify such questions as how good or bad our propaganda actually is today, how it should change or evolve in the 1970s, and whether Americans should be able to see and hear it themselves.

Theoretically, the law protects the American public from being propagandized at its own expense by forbidding USIA to show its wares on the home front. Exceptions have been made in recent years, however, and last month, despite objections by Senator Fulbright and others, Sen. James Buckley, the conservative New York Republican, showed a USIA propaganda film about Czechoslovakia on his TV show. After the broadcast, Fulbright's committee passed a measure that would reaffirm and clarify the ban on internal dissemination. Though the measure has no teeth, USIA is playing safe at the moment by withholding all its output from the domestic media until the issue is resolved. The

Propaganda: What We Say —And How

By Joseph Morgenstern

taxpayers, therefore, are either protected once again from Administration propaganda, or prevented from laying eyes or ears on the stuff for which they're paying \$200 million a year.

What do we really tell our friends and enemies abroad? What effect does it have? "Czechoslovakia: 1968," the Academy Award-winning short that kicked up the fuss on the Buckley show, is an efficient and particularly repellent piece of goods. Starting with sweetly pastoral (and occasionally fake) shots from 1918 and ending with the Soviet invasion of 1968, it reduces 50 years of history to thirteen minutes of short takes and shrewd juxtapositions, that make strong appeals to the emotions and sometimes misrepresent history. Newsreel clips of the Soviet Army's liberation of Prague from the Nazis in 1945 are intercut with those of Hitler's occupation, suggesting one was as bad as the other when, in fact, Czech Communists and non-Communists alike greeted the Soviets with open arms. The film has no narration. The only word in it is *svoboda*, Czech for "freedom." The same style is used to comment on the Berlin wall in



USIA's Shakespeare: A need to know

"Barricade." These films are cinematic, all right, but they're also slippery, furtive, and they raise the question of why a nation that's supposed to be open and truthful should rely on subliminal trickery to condemn the conduct of other nations.

"Vietnam! Vietnam!", produced by John Ford at a cost of some \$250,000, proved such an embarrassment in its few public showings abroad that it was withdrawn from circulation and awarded the oblivion it so richly deserved. Belligerently simple-minded, necrophiliac in its frequent close-ups of bloated corpses and mutilated children, the film subtly blames the Democrats for our involvement in Vietnam and makes the antiwar movement look like a pack of craven imbeciles. "The Silent Majority," made in 1969 but still in circulation, is a lumbering tract that makes much of a Gallup poll and reinforces its message of widespread support for the Nixon Administration with a smug, sanctimonious tone that might be worthier of a Salazar or Duvalier administration. Yet USIA, like the nation, speaks in more than one tone of voice. The most popular agency film in recent months is "President Nixon in China—A Journey for Peace." Its narrator, like its star, goes to great lengths to praise Chinese athletes, culture, schoolchildren and snow shovelers.

American Pastoral

The best of the agency's production of twenty to thirty films each year can be excellent indeed. "An Impression of John Steinbeck: Writer" looks at the man and his work, intercuts clips from the movie version of "The Grapes of Wrath" with scenes of Salinas, Monterey and the green paradise of a valley where Steinbeck grew up. "The Numbers Start With the River" is a life-affirming work, narrated by an elderly couple who've got all they need and love in the calm little town around them. By the nature of their subjects, however, such films look to the past and cherish landscapes and values that are fast disappearing. There's a lack of vitality in these American Pastoral works, and not much evidence in any other USIA films of what



America Illustrated: A sense of style

Continued

STATOTHR

CARL T. ROWAN

Foot-in-the-Mouth Disease Could Wreck USIA

Foot-in-the-mouth disease generally is not a fatal ailment, but it could be for my old government outpost, the U.S. Information Agency.

For the second time in its 19-year life, USIA is about to have its budget slashed and its programs gutted because of indiscretions by its top officials.

A Senate committee headed by Sen. J. William Fulbright, D-Ark., wants to slash \$45 million off USIA's request of \$200 million for fiscal 1973. If this cut is sustained by Congress, USIA will be about 25 percent worse off in budget power than at any time in its history.

The ostensible reason for USIA's budget woes is that it has pulled another of those Peter Flanigan-type "executive privilege" ploys. The Foreign Relations Committee, which for the first time in history got authority to "authorize" money for USIA before the Appropriations Committee acts, wants USIA's classified "country plans," or documents stating what USIA proposes to achieve in each country. USIA got President Nixon to invoke executive privilege and refuse to turn over the documents.

But that's only part of the problem.

It surely is no coincidence that Fulbright recently was assailed as "very naive and stupid" by USIA's motion picture director, Bruce Herschensohn. Although Herschensohn resigned and USIA Director Frank Shakespeare apologized to Fulbright, the damage seems to be lasting.

This is a pathetic case of history repeating itself in a way in which the national interest is damaged by sensitive senators who ought not let their personal pride or sense of power push them into

vindictive actions.

In 1957, with the ordeal of "McCarthyism" a bitter hangover and Democrats recoiling from charges that theirs was "the party of treason," USIA Director Arthur Larson said in a speech in Hawaii:

"Throughout the New and Fair Deals, this country was in the grip of a somewhat alien philosophy, imported from Europe."

A tough, powerful, easily-offended gent named Lyndon Baines Johnson presided over the Senate Appropriations subcommittee that set USIA's budget in those days. Angry over Larson's political slur (Franklin Delano Roosevelt was Johnson's idol), he cut USIA's 1958 budget request of \$140 million to \$89 million, or \$24 million less than the agency had received for 1957.

Intensive battling by House members got Johnson to come up to \$95.1 million, but that was still a bitterly destructive

cut—brought on by a needlessly dumb political gambit.

It took seven years for USIA to get back to the budget level from which Johnson had whacked it.

The current Fulbright assault reflects criticisms of USIA that go deeper than Herschensohn's impolitic remarks. Some senators and a lot of State Department people, from the top down, have been complaining that USIA is too political, too inclined to pursue its own foreign policy, which is generally more right-wingish and cold-warish than President Nixon's policies.

Some State Department officers and even a few USIA career officers have campaigned privately to undercut Shakespeare and deprive him of support from congressional liberals who generally have given the agency strong backing.

Fulbright has been miffed

at USIA for a long time. For years he has held the notion that cultural programs ought to be separated from USIA so they don't get contaminated by hard propaganda. Some members of the Foreign Relations Committee support the argument that USIA ought to be just a wing of the State Department instead of an independent agency.

Fulbright may feel helpless to curb expenditures for massive U.S. military intervention in Vietnam. "Executive privilege" may gall him. But this is no time to let his frustrations drive him to cut USIA to the heart.

We can hope that on reflection Fulbright will see this and that, twice burned, everyone associated with USIA will face the fact that partisan politicking is the greatest single threat to the agency's survival.

Provides Red World with Factual, Balanced View

Information Agency Fights for U.S. Image

WASHINGTON — (AP) — While Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe fight for survival in Congress, this country's third and largest propaganda agency is alive and busy, selling the American Way of Life from 1776 Pennsylvania Avenue and a half a dozen other Washington buildings.

The U.S. Information Agency is, in fact, so busy that in the days of federal belt-tightening, it is asking Congress for more money, not less.

USIA wants \$198 million for fiscal 1973, a \$2 million increase, to continue cranking out a stream of books, magazines, pamphlets, films, radio broadcasts, TV programs and to maintain outposts in such remote spots as Luluabourg in the Republic of Zaire and Maserujn Lesotho.

THE MILLIONS of words and pictures flowing daily through USIA's printers and transmitters carry one continuous message, chiefly to Iron Curtain countries:

No matter how turbulent American society may seem because of riots, assassinations, plots and bombings, life in the United States is better than anywhere else.

Item: Although USIA reported every known detail of last fall's Attica prison uprising during which 40 convicts and hostages died, it managed in the course of a special series over Voice of America to convey the impression that life here is better even in prison.

For example, the VOA found a California professor who said Americans invented modern incarceration which he describes as just locking people up and not locking them up and beating on them, too.

CITING a general easing of world tensions, some in Congress argue that hard-sell propaganda no longer is necessary, and USIA should be abolished.

One who does not in USIA's chunky boyish-looking director, Frank Shakespeare Jr., 45, who next week must go before a skeptical Senate Foreign Relations Committee to defend his budget requests.

"A major world power, which we are in this moment in history, must have a mechanism by which it attempts to communicate what it stands for to people throughout the world," the ex-television executive said.

In past years, USIA has had little trouble obtaining its budget requests from Congress because the law required it to appear only before generally sympathetic appropriations committees.

UNDER A RECENT legislative reorganization act, however, USIA must appear for the first time before Foreign Relations, headed by Sen. J. W. Fulbright.

USIA officials are understandably nervous. The Arkansas Democrat has just won the first round in a battle with the administration that could end government financing for Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe which have been beaming propaganda to the Soviet Union and its East European satellites since the peak of the Cold War.

"These radios should be given an opportunity to take their rightful place in the graveyard of Cold War relics," said Fulbright, who contends U.S. propaganda acts as an irritant, delaying arrival of Nixon's "era of negotiation instead of confrontation."

FULBRIGHT WAS out of town and unavailable for comment. But an aide, saying the committee was approaching the hearings with an open mind, also said the senator could be expected to remain consistent with his stated desire to see a lowering of the U.S. profile.

The effort to scuttle the two radio stations began last year with disclosures in the Senate that they were being supported secretly by the Central Intelligence Agency.

For years there have been rumors USIA, too, is linked with CIA.

Questioned by Fulbright on possible links with CIA at a 1970 hearing, a USIA officer said any comment would have to come "in executive session from appropriate other officials."

EVEN PRIVATELY, USIA officials are unanimous in denying any link with the CIA.

"Look," commented one young officer, "the CIA is the best run agency in town. If they ran us we wouldn't be so fouled up."

While there is some talk on Capitol Hill of doing away with USIA entirely, serious debate centers on the agency's size. Its 9,881 employees are more, according to a former USIA official, than those employed full-time on propaganda by all other nations combined. Its role in U.S. foreign policy, and the tone and quality of its product will also be questioned.

"USIA has been a puzzle to policy makers ever since it began back in World War II," said one 28-year-old employee. "Hell, it's had half a dozen different names."

"EVERYTHING this agency does is based on the idea we've got something the Zambians want. Well, maybe they don't want it."

A veteran USIA employee who thinks the agency is too big said, "Look at this, we have a guy in Lesotho. I don't even know what they do there. But I do know that whatever they do in Lesotho, there is no way it can be better than the United States fairs."

The most talked of alternative to abolishing USIA is returning it to the State Department where most of its programs were lodged from 1946 to 1953.

State, indeed, would probably like to have control over the agency, now legally bound only to listen to the State's policy guidance.

BUT SHAKESPEARE has pushed hard to give USIA a higher position in the policy pecking order, specifically to get it back on the National Security Council from which President Nixon excluded it three years ago in a streamlining effort.

"If you are going to effectively promulgate a program on a worldwide basis it is necessary to have the deepest possible understanding of the nuances," Shakespeare in an interview said.

Because Shakespeare was and is an outspoken anti-Communist, there was open speculation in Washington that USIA would speak more stridently after he took over. The official line, however, has not grown perceptibly harder.

"Mr. Shakespeare is as firmly anti-Communist as he ever was," said one top-ranking agency official. "But I think he's more subtle than when he first came here. That's because he has traveled and has a better understanding of world affairs. It was inevitable."

SHAKESPEARE ALSO went a long way toward improving strained agency morale by encouraging young officers to form a grievance committee which can see him at a moment's notice. The consequence of that: A dearth of serious grievances.

As for the agency's products, Bruce Herschensohn, head of the film service said: "We are trying to build a climate of respect for the United States and a climate of disrespect for

continued

Tarnished USIA

Hard Line and Hard Times

Beset 'Propaganda' Agency

By Stanley Karnow
Washington Post Staff Writer

During the Kennedy era, when Edward R. Murrow directed it, the United States Information Agency was one of Washington's glamorous bureaus. But the USIA has since slipped into hard times—and there is now even doubt whether it can long survive in its present form.

One senior staff member contends that the agency is "going to hell," and another says that he has "never seen morale so low." A young officer describes USIA programs as "just plain silly," and even people in the upper echelons of the agency concede that their organization is a "stepchild" in the Nixon administration's foreign affairs establishment.

Comprising 10,000 U.S. and foreign employees in more than 100 countries, the USIA makes movies and television films, arranges exhibitions and lectures, publishes books, magazines and pamphlets, and feeds copy to local newspapers. Through the Voice of America, it broadcasts in languages ranging from Albanian to Urdu.

The essential purpose of this vast operation, fueled by an annual budget of \$193 million, is to promote the United States abroad.

Yet all its activities apparently have failed to give the USIA real influence in the formulation and conduct of American policy. In the view of its officials, several factors are responsible for the agency's lack of clout.

The USIA has been hit by rising costs and a steady drop in the size of its staff. About 2,000 American and foreign employees have been dismissed or retired over the past five years. Numerous overseas posts have been closed.

At the same time, although its representatives often perform key roles in U.S. diplomatic missions abroad, the agency has not gained a significant place in the Washington decision-making machinery. In that respect, its decline parallels the decline of the State Department and the more general fall in U.S. interest in foreign affairs.

There is frequently a sharp contrast between USIA operations abroad and in Washington. Officials overseas are usually free to function as they wish. But in Washington, controls are tighter as the USIA seeks to make its influence felt.

While USIA Director Frank Shakespeare claims to maintain close relations with President Nixon, the agency has been excluded from a seat on the White House's National Security Council, the highest body in the shaping of U.S. foreign policy.

This was not the case in previous administrations. The President's chief foreign affairs adviser, Henry Kissinger, is reportedly hostile to Shakespeare's conservative political attitudes. Shakespeare's right-wing bias and his attempted for-

More recently, Shakespeare's actions have again appeared to run counter to White House strategies—an indication that he may not be fully clued in to the President's thinking.

China Visit

Last summer, Shakespeare scheduled a meeting of top USIA officials in the Far East to discuss ways of "containing" Communist China. The meeting, due to have been held in Tokyo in September, was hastily canceled when the President announced his plan to visit Peking.

Shakespeare had also authorized the head of the USIA film service, Bruce Herschensohn, to make a movie portraying the Chinese Communist takeover of Tibet and the escape to India of the Dalai Lama, the region's spiritual leader.

The movie, completed at a cost of \$73,000 after eight months of work, was quietly shelved when President Nixon's China trip was announced. But Herschensohn, a Goldwater Republican who claims that he and Shakespeare see eye-to-eye "politically and creatively," apparently hopes that the President's China policy may change. "The film is temporarily being held up," he said, "but it will be released in time."

The USIA film service, which operates on an annual budget of \$8.5 million, also bombed not long ago with a movie entitled "Vietnam!

Vietnam!" A three-year effort that cost \$250,000, the film tries to justify the U.S. commitment to Vietnam while subtly implying that Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and the Democratic Party were responsible for the involvement in the war.

Herschensohn admits that the film's reception overseas has been "practically zero." He argues, however, that the movie "will be of great use" to historians as an "explanation and clarification" of U.S. policy in Vietnam. "The war could have been won in five minutes" if the United States had bombed Haiphong harbor and targets closer to Hanoi, he said. "But we never get complimented for our restraint."

Another USIA movie effort that has not been a big hit abroad was a film on the Fourth of July featuring

Billy Graham. After viewing it, the USIA representative in the African state of Sierra Leone fired back an official message to Washington describing the film as a "grotesquerie" and proposing that the agency's next patriotic movie portray "a close-up of a fat man's belly, with the American flag sticking out of his navel."

Some of Herschensohn's past endeavors have been of far higher caliber. His movie on the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia won an Academy Award. His film on the assassination of President Kennedy, "Years of Lightning, Day of Drums," was a masterpiece that won special congressional approval for release in the United States over GOP protests that it was flattering to the Democrats. By law, the USIA is permitted to distribute its productions overseas only.

Propaganda Business

Nevertheless, many agency officials see most of Herschensohn's output as evidence that the USIA is in the propaganda rather than information business. The view is confirmed by Shakespeare's own affirmation that the USIA is "a propaganda agency." His selection of political appointees to manage the agency has reinforced the feeling within the USIA that Shakespeare is determined to put out a special brand of conservative propaganda.

Among the top political appointees in the agency is Kenneth Giddens, millionaire Alabama theater and radio station owner who heads the Voice of America and asserts that he is engaged in a "crusade" to "awaken the world to the blessings of the free enterprise system." Another is Kenneth Towery who runs the USIA's policy section and is sometimes mentioned as a possible successor to Shakespeare.

A Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter who later served as legislative assistant to Sen. John Tower (R-Tex.), Towery strongly believes that the USIA must free itself of State Department control. He also views the role of the agency as challenging the Democrats, who he says are "coming on strong and getting stronger every day," es-

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THE U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY ORDERED ALL VENETIAN BLINDS IN ITS WASHINGTON OFFICES TO BE SET AT 45° ANGLES TO THWART POTENTIAL SPIES FROM PHOTOGRAPHING SECRETS WITH TELESCOPIC LENS (ULTRA-RIGHTIST WIM DUCKLEY SERVES AS AN ADVISOR TO U.S.I.A.)



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USIA: Overkill in Propaganda

BY ROBERT S. ELEGANT

MUNICH--The United States Information Agency has long been odd-man-out in the foreign service.

USIA is today virtually conducting its own foreign policy--hard-line, doctrinaire anti-communism which conflicts bewilderingly with the Administration's conciliatory, enlightened approach.

That retrogressive policy, its effects exacerbated by savage reductions in manpower, had depressed the morale and effectiveness of USIA officers. Fewer than 1,000 now serve abroad, and further cuts are expected.

Some of the most effective officers are resigning, being relieved or taking advantage of new regulations which permit retirement at 50. Instead of cutting away dead wood, the agency is losing numbers of its best people. When replaced, they are often succeeded by inexperienced, unqualified officers who draw low salaries because of their youth. Meanwhile, older mediocrities hang on, drawing large salaries.

The USIA has had many dedicated, competent officers abroad, but its directors have largely been undistinguished. The late Edward R. Murrow was the greatest exception; an inspired, gifted professional.

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The present director, Frank Shakespeare, is conditioned by his background in television advertising and administration--and motivated by a strong ideological bias. Addicted to the hard sell, he has issued directives prescribing a new, tough line against the Communists, and he has slighted culture and information.

A ludicrous, but revealing expression of the new line is heard in the common complaint: "You can't get anywhere unless you've served in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. Shakespeare wants his men to know just how bad the enemy is from personal, eyeball-to-eyeball experience."

USIA officers are repeatedly told that their mission is to show up the Communists. Exhibitions and motion-pictures sponsored

plistic purpose. Libraries abroad are being screened to ensure that most of their books attack communism vehemently.

For example, a film on the great religious shown by USIA emphasizes the Communists' anti-religious policies.

Because of that policy, USIA, never remarkably effective, is even less effective today. Instead of conveying the positive--and, of necessity, the negative--aspects of American life and policy, the agency beats the tom-toms of anti-communism. Of course individual officers strive to resist the trend, but they are isolated and ineffective.

USIA's divergence from the White House's dedication to an "era of negotiation and conciliation" is so strange it is almost inexplicable. Perhaps the Administration simply doesn't consider the agency's activities terribly important, despite its \$193 million budget. That conjecture is borne out by the steady pruning of the ranks, at the rate of 10% a year since 1968.

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The United States should strive to project a liberal image abroad to counteract--insofar as possible--the stigmas unfortunately and unfairly created by the Vietnam war. Instead, USIA output tends to confirm dark suspicions that Washington is engaged in an implacable, and--it must be said--unintelligent crusade against "atheistic, aggressive communism."

Certain workaday activities of the USIA are still quite productive. The daily Wireless Bulletin presents a concise summary of both official views and press comment. English-language classes are almost SRO. The Voice of America strives, insofar as it can, for objectivity and commands a wide audience. But USIA is in general neither winning support for U.S. policy nor conveying an accurate picture of America. Too many time-servers, petrified by new directives, react as did the public affairs officer for Germany 10 years ago to the suggestion that he concern himself with explaining Washington's position on Vietnam. "People here don't care. Besides, Vietnam will never be that important." Either the American image abroad conveyed by USIA is important or it is not. If it is important, USIA needs more imaginative leadership and more relevant policies. If it is not important, why bother?

STATOTHR

\$250,000 U.S.I.A. Film on Vietnam, 3 Years in Making, Being Shelved

STATOTHR

By TAD SZULC

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 9 — After three years of work and an outlay of nearly \$250,000, the United States Information Agency is letting a major propaganda film on the Vietnam war slip into oblivion.

Agency officials said today that no formal decision had been made to shelve the hour-long film — "Vietnam, Vietnam!" — But authoritative sources in the agency indicated that it would "definitely" not be offered for television or theater showings to foreign audiences.

"It's a dead duck and it will stay in the can," a source in the agency said in response to inquiries whether the film, directed by John Ford and now virtually completed, would ever be released.

It was reliably reported that the head of the agency, Frank J. Shakespeare Jr., had concluded that the changing military and political situation in Vietnam, as well as domestic political considerations, now raised doubts on the film's value as convincing and productive propaganda.

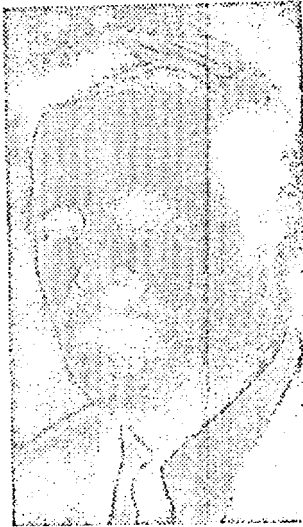
Will 'Fade Away'

In the absence of a decision by Mr. Shakespeare that the film should be distributed, the sources said, "Vietnam, Vietnam!" will simply be allowed to "fade away."

Only a few months ago, the agency's motion picture and television division sent out circulars to posts abroad saying that the film would soon be available for distribution to foreign television networks and stations or for cinema showings.

The agency has refused to show the film to newsmen pending completion and a decision by Mr. Shakespeare to authorize its distribution abroad. But it was understood that "Vietnam, Vietnam!" sought to portray the United States Government's side in the war controversy.

The act of Congress that set up the U.S.I.A. specifically barred domestic presentation of the agency's films. The only exception was the permission granted by Congress to allow distribution of the picture on the life of President Kennedy, produced after his assassination.



Associated Press

Frank J. Shakespeare Jr. reportedly has decided not to distribute the film.

Begun Under Johnson

The Kennedy film was produced by Bruce Herschensohn, then a freelance moviemaker. Now the agency's assistant director for motion pictures and television, Mr. Herschensohn began producing the Vietnam picture during the last year of the Johnson Administration.

An agency official said that the production of the film was continued under the Nixon Administration "out of sheer bureaucratic momentum," although doubts had been arising in the agency.

The one-hour film reduced from footage of six-and-a-half hours was said to show the United States military assistance to the South Vietnamese armed forces, American military operations in Vietnam, and enemy atrocities.

It reportedly includes North Vietnamese film on the war, obtained in Tokyo last year, and public debates in the United States between antiwar spokesmen and advocates of Administration policies.

But, one official commented, "The film, as edited, tends to show the war critics in an unfavorable light."

In producing the film, Mr.

Ford repeatedly visited Vietnam with camera crews. He also had access to some film shot by commercial networks.

Despite lengthy production work, involving frequent changes in the shooting script to conform to the changing political situation, and numerous retakes, the agency does not believe that the cost of the Vietnam film was excessive.

They noted that the film on the moon flight of Apollo 11, which got huge worldwide exposure, cost \$212,000. Mr. Herschensohn's Kennedy film cost \$122,000, and the U.S.I.A. still regards it as its most successful effort in this field.

Mr. Herschensohn is known to believe that a film on Vietnam is necessary to counterbalance what he regards as the "one-sided" approach to the war in films produced by its opponents.

He is also known to believe that even if the film is not released in the immediate future, it will be a valuable contribution to scholars "in 1981 or 1999" and those "who are not yet born."